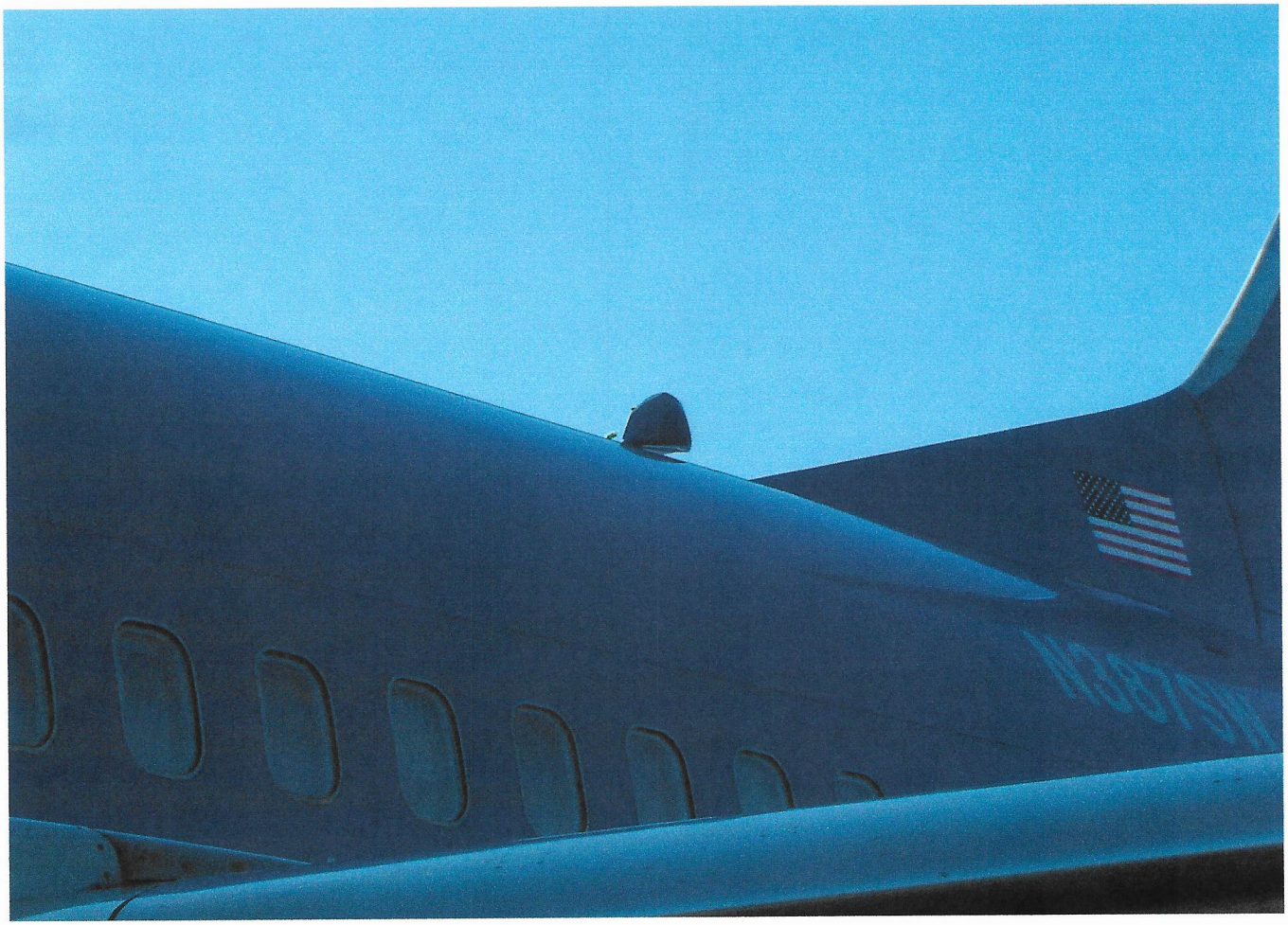

US AIRWAYS
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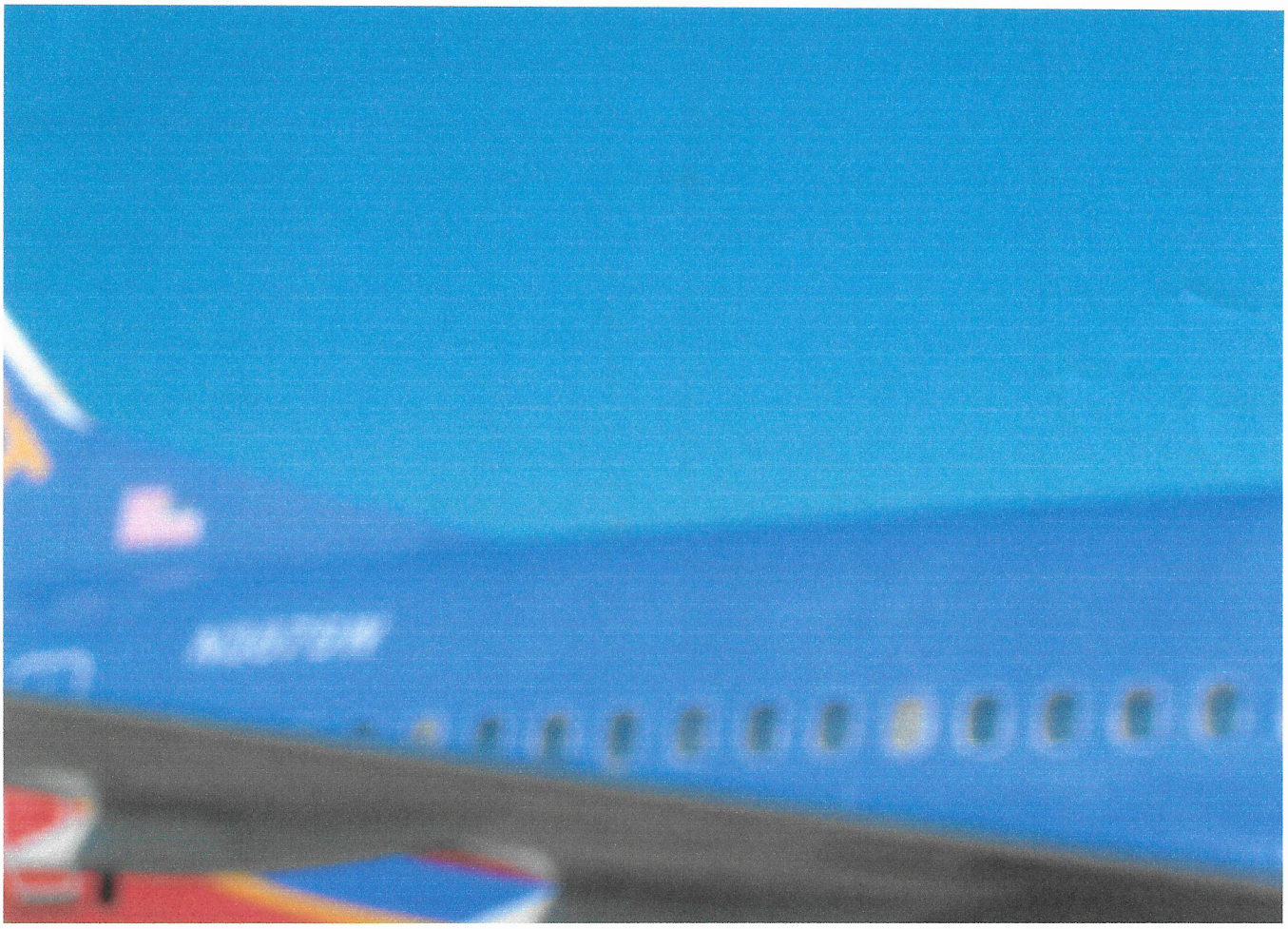

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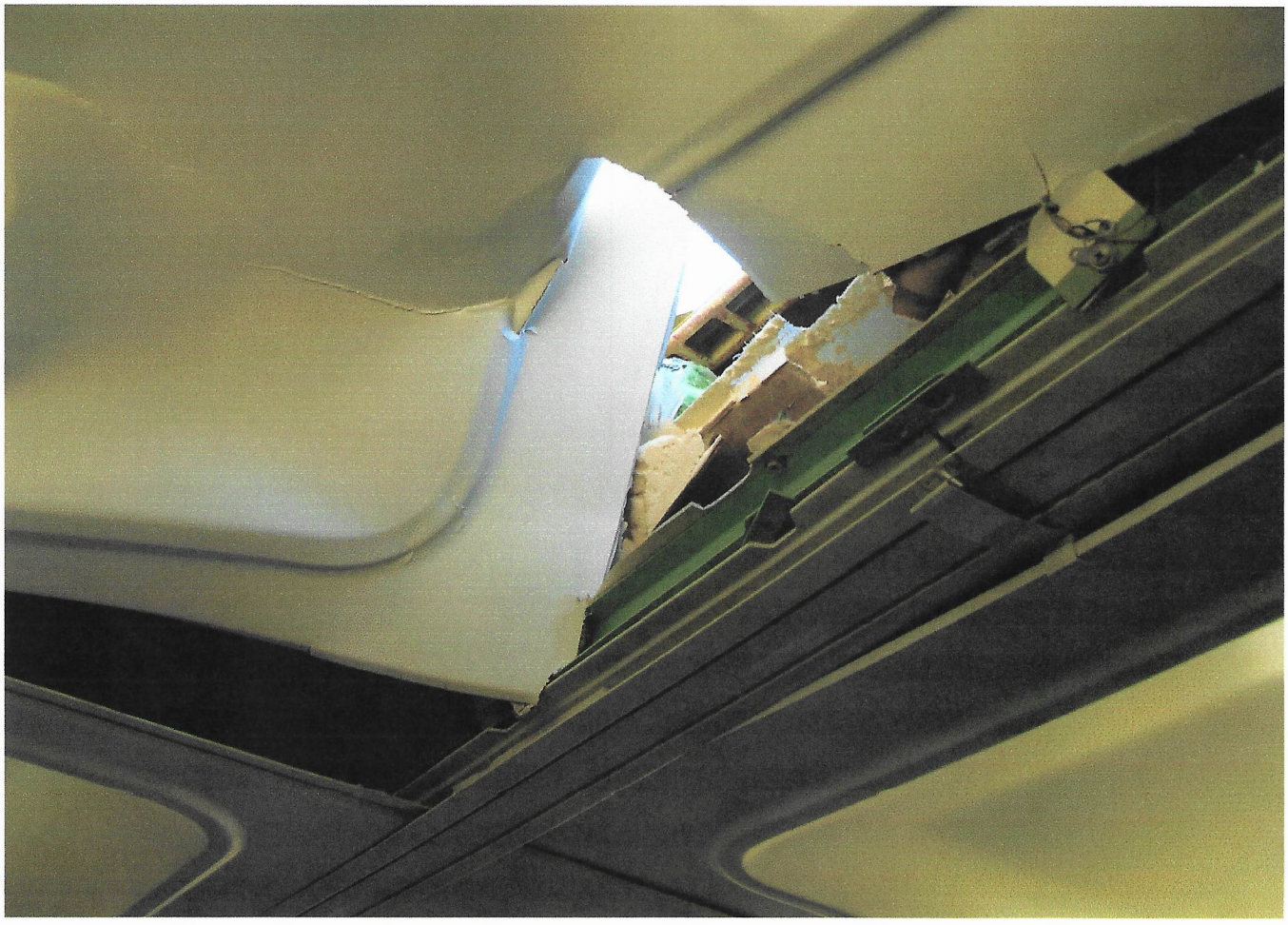


Top Flite J

Area golfers shine at Berry Hi

Charleston Daily

uesday, July 14, 2009

Charleston, West Virginia, dailymail.com

Hole rips open in jet's roof

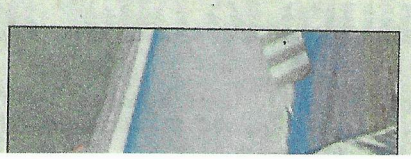
TOM HINDMAN/DAILY MAIL

An investigator from the Federal Aviation Administration takes photographs of the gash in the top of a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 that had to make an unscheduled landing at Yeager Airport Monday night.

Forced landing at Yeager

No injuries reported as Baltimore-bound 737 loses cabin pressure

By ASHLEY B. CRAIG
DAILY MAIL STAFF



Southwest Airlines Flight 2294, headed from Nashville from Balti-

130th Airlift Wing were waiting for the jetliner when it landed.

Plante said the plane made its landing at Yeager just as if it were making a connection

TOM HINDMAN/DAILY MAIL

An investigator from the Federal Aviation Administration takes photographs of the gash in the top of a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 that had to make an unscheduled landing at Yeager Airport Monday night.

Forced landing at Yeager

No injuries reported as Baltimore-bound 737 loses cabin pressure

By ASHLEY B. CRAIG
DAILY MAIL STAFF

Southwest Airlines Flight 2294, headed from Nashville from Baltimore, was in the skies near Charleston when the 128 passengers on board suddenly found the jet's cabin losing air pressure.

The aircraft's emergency oxygen masks deployed after a football-sized hole formed in the fuselage.

The Boeing 737 was just 30 minutes from its destination at Baltimore-Washington International Airport in Maryland when it had to be diverted Monday to Yeager Airport.

The plane landed safely in Charleston about 6:15 p.m. with no injuries reported among passengers or the five crewmembers on board.

Yeager Airport was notified of the unscheduled landing shortly after the cabin lost pressure and emergency crews reacted quickly to get into position, airport spokesman Mike Plante said.

Aviation officials still are investigating to determine how the football-sized hole developed. All 128 passengers and five crewmembers aboard made it off safely.

Charleston police and fire crews arrived on the scene within minutes, and airport police, emergency medical and fire personnel from the West Virginia Air National Guard's 130th Airlift Wing were waiting for the jetliner when it landed.

Plante said the plane made its landing at Yeager just as if it were making a connection.

"The pilot landed it as normal and the passengers deplaned as normal," Plante said.

The passengers were offered medical treatment but all declined, he said.

They were seated in the secure boarding area of the airport terminal and treated to beverages and free pizza from Gino's Pizzeria.

Their flight had left Nashville at 4:05 p.m. CST and was set to arrive in Baltimore about 6:50 p.m., according to Southwest Airlines' online flight tracker.

The first sign of trouble happened about 30 minutes into the flight, when the plane lost cabin pressure. The pilot, who was not identified, then began a descent to about 10,000 feet.

■ Turn to JET/12A

Jet

▲ Continued from 1A

Boeing 747 picks up passengers to complete flight

At that time, Charleston was the closest airport, said Marilee McInnis, a spokeswoman for Southwest Airlines.

"The (National Transportation Safety Board) is investigating to determine the cause of the depressurization but it appears to be related to a small-to-mid-sized hole mid-cabin near the top of the aircraft," McInnis said.

Aviation officials still were investigating late Monday night to determine how the hole developed. Investigators from the Federal Aviation Administration already were on scene at Yeager. They climbed into a cherry picker to examine the gash from above.

The hole was on the top left side toward the tail of the jet, quite visible on the plane's bright purple exterior.

Plante said the hole "went clean through to the cabin" and had been visible to passengers inside.

Passengers had about a two-hour wait at Yeager before a Southwest Airlines Boeing 747 landed at 8:30 p.m. to take them the rest of the way to Maryland.

"They looked like folks waiting for a connection," Plante said. "I expected a little bit more excitement, but they all seemed fine."

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Breathe well